231 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchang-
439 ing their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by
184 grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance
[241] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

A great effort has been
654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of
441 French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro